a dead spot of light magazine

No. XXIV // 2025.1

Introduction

What to write here?
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Yes, this is the 24th edition of this magazine of mine and I feel absolutely not shame in continuing the numeration, even though the "previous" edition of this series had seen the light of day 2013-09-25. Quite some time has passed since, but it still feels right to continue on this path.

What can be found in this edition of the magazine?

Basically, it follows in line with what I had written about earlier, but maybe approaching things from a broader point of view.

What has changed is that I have switched to LaTeX and I absolutely do not regret this. This edition is a first stepping stone in the direction in which I want to progress. The header and the footer are not in the way that I want to have them. I should have picked the images sooner. Some other parts feel a bit clunky and not right, but it is better to do one of the normal text editors that are around. LaTeX + Linux + a git repo just works.

I would like to thank all the bands that have participated in this edition. Their appearance is alphabetically and not according to some preferences. Only (?) six interviews make an appearance here, but fourteen reviews.

Since people approached me again and again, whether they can support me, you can

`https://www.patreon.com/c/oneyoudontknow`

1$ that is the one and only tier. There won't be any other. It would be nice to pay for a proper IDE and not always out of my own pocket. And I could through this also buy more releases and support other bands. But only pay if you have a buck to spare. Only then and under no other circumstance. This variant of my magazine will always be free and available at the Internet Archive. Funny side note: Patreon wants me to add social sites, of which I have none. Neither under my pseudonym nor under my real name. I also do not have WhatsApp and that stuff.

And yes, I like my Linux smartphone. There is no Google stuff on it.

Feedback would be nice. You can send it here: oneyoudontknow@posteo.net

I hope you find some joy and inspiration from the odd lines that I have written in this magazine.

Next edition? In the summer, I think.

thorsten // oneyoudontknow

Sources of the images:
`https://archive.org/details/clevelandart-2013.240-steps-in-a-garden`
`https://archive.org/details/clevelandart-2014.328-capital-punishment-t`
`https://archive.org/details/clevelandart-1990.133-valley-of-the-yosemi`

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Interviews

Adder's Fork

Who are you, and where are you from?
My name is Marko Köfler, I'm the head behind the Gothic metal project Adder's Fork, born in Vienna and currently living in St. Pölten, Lower Austria.

When and why did you start playing music?
My formative youth was a tough time. In the late 90s and early 2000s I was facing repression and hostility on every corner, due to just having a differing mentality compared to the people around me. Born on the other side of the country, I had to fight a lot to earn some respect and being introduced to "angry" music did a lot to help me through dark days. Like many guys of my generation, the uprising of nu metal and its close relatives helped getting me into all kinds of extreme metal soon after. The deeper I dug into the meat of the genre, the more I wanted to be able to play that stuff myself and that's how buying an electric guitar came into consideration.

Why did you start "Shores of Sheol" and later progress to "Adder's Fork"? The genres of these two bands are not even close to each other.
Shores of Sheol began in my novice days of playing guitar, and its earliest incarnation was just me trying to put my extreme ideas into some kind of order. The better I got, the more I could transfer these ideas into a sound that closely resembled Greek black metal, which was my favourite music subgenre at the time. But I locked myself into this shtick way too hard and after a while all I got was diminishing returns, due to my unwillingness to expand my musical horizons. I stopped playing instruments altogether, sold all my equipment around 2010 and laid SoS to rest. It took a few years of radio silence (and rediscovery of music as a whole) and a new mindset towards composition to revert into "musician mode". I ended up loving tons of early 80s goth music which I ultimately wanted to create myself, but slowly the metal elements were creeping back into the writing, but they were no longer restricting, but substantially enhancing my ability to compose.

What would be behind your band name? Why did you pick it?
I remember it jumping at me while throwing a glance at Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth. It left a lasting impression and I thought it would be a perfectly suitable name for what I was going for.

Speaking of genres, why have you switched over to "Heavy/Gothic Metal"? You were forced or threatened, right?
Shifting taste and the wish for change after my musical break...it just happened, no further actions were necessary to convince me, sorry – no gun violence either.

What bands have influenced you and have an influence on you right now?
Megadeth, Rotting Christ and Annihilator were those most important early influences that made me want to play guitar like they did. Later, I learned how Robert Smith of The Cure constructed his songs and the impactful minimalism of The Sisters of Mercy's music was another reminder of how a decent amount of repetition can lead to fruitful results. Also, Paradise Lost are way up there when it comes to telling great stories in concise runtimes, with great atmospheric traits. For more subdued instrumentals, I like to dabble in the early Danzig discography - what a great way to combine stunning vocals and bluesy heaviness.

Can you guide the reader a little bit through Adder's Fork releases and their musical differences?
Well, the first steps of Adder's Fork were almost 100% non-metal, since the "The Joys of Solitude" demo really only has very few distorted guitars and actual riffs, it was mostly traditional chord-/arpeggio-based groundwork - very barebones - with subdued vocals because I wasn't really confident about singing yet, just really wanted it to be a clean expression of what was haunting me personally at the time. With each subsequent release (and a few singing lessons at a later date) the vocals became more prominent in the mix, simply because it felt a lot better recording them. While the debut album "A Farewell to Expectations" still sounds a bit like a more "metalized" version of the demo days with more varied songwriting, "The Individualist" is really the first EP where I felt "yeah, this is what Adder's Fork is about". Guitars and bass were heavier and tighter, the complexity of the compositions two steps above everything I'd done before and even some harsh vocals came back into the picture. Though less of a spotlight on the oldschool goth influence, it did enhance the darker and more aggressive emotions on that EP. "The Fatalist" did the opposite, turning down the attack a little bit,

displaying more fragile and cleaner material with a more professional production package coming along with it. Soon after, Austrian label "Running Wild Productions" would pick me up and get Adder's Fork a lot more recognized in the local scene - my participation on the 4-way split album "A Gathering of Four" turned out a wise move, despite only having one new track and a few remasters from my previous EPs on it. With the label's support, my current "Apparitions" EP received a lot more attention than any previous Adder's Fork release in the past. I'm glad that this mini album is the one people picked up, because it's certainly the culmination of everything that's been Adder's Fork prior, but with an extra layer of professionalism, great guest singers and the widest musical range so far, having female soprano vocals, an actual ballad plus one or two doom/death metal riffs on the same record without feeling disjointed at all. Proud of this one, really.

What, if any, is the difference in terms of approaching the music and crafting it, compared with your earlier music and what you do now?
Most of the change comes down to using more music theory when constructing songs. I've just recently started learning the piano and let's just say that quite a few things make a lot more sense to me now when composing.

I wrote a review about the 2020 "The Fatalist" release, but quite some time has passed since it has seen the light of day, and one can clearly hear the evolution and progress you made in the music. Leaving a new-found heaviness aside, the songs have more facets and elements, which makes it an interesting experience to listen to. What are the characteristics of your music, and how do you see the development?
Yeah, I remember that fondly. Thanks, the main characteristic has always been a varying balance between heavy metal and gothic rock tantrums and every release sees a differing dosage of each coming together, with a drive to add a little more complexity and depth to the music with each new release. I have no ambitions of being a technical wizard on any of my instruments, so I need a certain push to improve my abilities as a musician, this being the prospect of writing better, more advanced songs on the next CD.

Somehow the music does not sound very modern. It is rather a kind of 80s Heavy Metal meets Gothic metal. What are your influences in terms of bands and their albums?
Indeed. While I do somewhat keep track on modern music, it's mostly the 80s and 90s influences that make me thrive. Let me throw the following albums out there for reference: Paradise Lost – Draconian Times, Danzig – The Lost Tracks of Danzig, The Sound – From the Lions Mouth; in terms of production and atmosphere, "Draconian Times" [this is an album, that I am quite fond of; note from the editor] is still a benchmark for the ideal mix between rawness and clarity in Gothic metal, Danzig's set of rare and unreleased material - though released way past his prime - contains some of his best bluesy and toned down material, a great influence in both vocals and balladesque instrumentation; The Sound's second album is among the greatest achievements in post-punk as it emits this absolutely depressing atmosphere without any need for even a pinch of aggression.

How much time do you spend on making music in a week? Roughly and on average would be enough.
This varies greatly. Can be between one and 15 hours a week. Mostly around 2 to 3 hours on average under normal 9 to 5 job conditions.

On your Bandcamp page, you write about the album that "[...] took around two to three years to make,", which means that it had been written during the COVID-19 times. Did this time influence the character and style of the music? Do you still have ideas lying around somewhere?
I do think that Covid gave some of my lyrics a different edge, but it mostly just shortened the production period of "The Fatalist" back in 2020 due to the lockdowns and being able to work in the studio more frequently. The early drafts of "Apparitions" were indeed created while still being affected by the pandemic and I do have some shelved ideas roaming about, but I don't think these would be actual songs even without the pandemic. Shelved for a reason.

What would be your plans for 2025?
Writing songs (already happening) and perhaps continuing my "Adder's Fork plays:" cover video series on YouTube. I started doing cover versions back in 2021 and I publish them on my channel. Puts me in a different mindset and it's always interesting and instructive to dive deeper into material that someone else wrote.

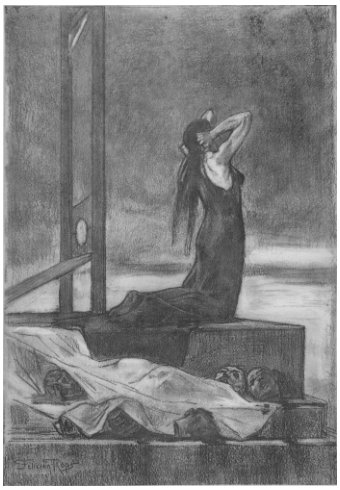
Considering your username at the Metal Archive (MA), CannibalCorpse, why do you not play some more intense kind of music?
Haha, I can see where this is going! Well, I did play in a death metal cover band ("Coffinfeeder") 20 years ago,

around the time I created my Metal Archives account! Times are changin', huh?

How does your MA profile relate to your current musical taste?
The column "favourite metal genres" reads "Various" and I guess that's still true. I still don't like many power, -core, stoner and brutal death metal bands [actually, I have shifted a bit in that direction; note from the editor], but I'm willing to listen to almost anything people throw at me. Outside of metal, there's of course a wide range of 80s synth-pop, gothic/post-punk and wave music, early electronica and hard rock to be enjoyed. With some oldschool hip hop/rap from the 80s/early 90s on top, when people still told intriguing stories over hard beats.

Are you still active at the MA?
Yes! Not terribly so, but it's the only forum I still visit regularly. Great place for recommendations. I'm still reviewing albums, by the way! [Yes, I am as well. Nearly twenty years, now; note from the editor]

Closing comments
Thank you for reaching out and conducting this interview. Always glad to talk about the progress I'm making with Adder's Fork and it's still utterly invigorating that people care about it. See you next time!



Desperation Eclipse

Who are you and where are you from? But considering that not even the MA lists any of the band members, maybe you want to maintain the secrecy.
Desperation Eclipse isn't a project that can be reduced to faces or names. We're from Germany, but origins are irrelevant when the music itself exposes the core of existence. Anonymity isn't a gimmick - it's an integral part of our philosophy. In a world consumed by ego cults and self-promotion, we refuse to indulge in the urge to showcase personalities. What matters is the work - the atmosphere, the weight, the echo of nihilism and inner emptiness. Anything else would betray the essence of our music. Misanthropy allows no room for idolization. [Considering my choice as a user name is "oneyoudontknow", I can definitely agree to that; note by the editor]

Why do you play funeral doom metal?
Because it's the only way to channel the unbearable burden of existence into sound. The heaviness of the riffs, the oppressive slowness - these aren't stylistic choices; they're reflections of life itself: a slow, inevitable decay that culminates in death. Other genres often try to mask emotions with superficial pathos. We aren't looking for solace. It's not about mourning in a romanticized sense, but about confronting the raw, bitter awareness of life's absurdity. Life is a slow fall - Funeral Doom is the sound of that inescapable descent.

What makes this genre different from others?
Funeral Doom is pure authenticity. No masks, no posing, no meaningless defiance of the inevitable. Where other

genres escape into theatrics or self-indulgence, Funeral Doom remains uncompromising. It doesn't celebrate drama; it embraces emptiness. This music isn't designed for quick consumption. It's a confrontation with the truths most people spend their entire lives trying to ignore: insignificance, impermanence, and the absence of meaning.

How would you describe the music to someone who has never listened to it?
Imagine standing in a room with no windows, no doors - the oxygen slowly running out. Our music is that feeling of suffocating inevitability. No pace to carry you away. No flicker of light. Just relentless heaviness that forces you to stop and confront. It's not music for nodding along or headbanging. It's sound forged from existential dread, the monotonous pulse of a heartbeat just before everything ends. A form of Death Worship, without religious connotations - more of a reverence for nothingness itself.

Why should someone listen to funeral doom metal?
They shouldn't. Funeral Doom isn't a product to be consumed for entertainment or to fill time. Those who listen to it do so because they must - because they want to feel an emptiness that words cannot express. Perhaps they seek catharsis, perhaps validation of their own disillusionment. This music doesn't offer an escape; it holds up a mirror. And for those who can bear to look, it might reveal how trivial everything else truly is.

What would your opinion be on the relation of depressive black metal vs funeral doom metal?
Depressive Black Metal and Funeral Doom may share thematic overlaps, but their approaches are fundamentally different. DSBM often drowns itself in self-indulgent portrayals of pain, wallowing in clichés like razor blades and suicidal imagery - a circus of self-pity. Funeral Doom, on the other hand, is colder, more impersonal, and universal. It's not about the artist's personal suffering but the omnipresent failure of existence itself. Our music isn't made to sit sobbing in a dark corner; it evokes emotions like hatred, alienation, and detachment - without wallowing in them like a child clinging to a broken toy.

When it comes to song-writing, how do you approach this aspect? Is it a riff or a certain atmosphere or sound texture that would be a starting point?
Atmosphere is the starting point. A sense of emptiness translated into sound. Riffs emerge from fragments of thoughts, from inner tensions. The structure of the songs is essential because each track is its own abyss to descend into. It's not about "finishing" a song, but about creating an emotional gravity that renders everything else meaningless.

How does this music fit into our hectic times? None of your tracks is less than thirteen minutes long. A quick spin of a single track would take some time.
It doesn't. And that's the point. In a world addicted to speed and superficiality, our music is an anomaly. No fast-food soundtrack for the busy modern mind. Our songs force deceleration; they demand endurance. They are a silent protest against the tyranny of efficiency - a monumental "no" to the triviality of modern life.

Could you describe your releases a bit? How do they deviate from each other? Can you already point to some "characteristics"?
Each release adds another layer of darkness. It's not about evolution in the traditional sense. We follow no roadmap, no conscious effort to develop from point A to B. Inner Ruin may sound more menacing than Heights of Negation, but that wasn't intentional. It's a byproduct of our inner states during its creation. Everything we do is an expression of anti-life.

Personally, I find your debut album "Inner Ruin" to be much more menacing than the debut ep "Heights of Negation". Is this a kind of evolution you want to make with your music? And do you have a certain sound you want to establish?
Yes, there are definitely differences between Heights of Negation and Inner Ruin. The latter feels more menacing, more diverse, and is no longer strictly confined to slow tempos and crushing riffs. You could call it an "evolution", but not in the sense of a consciously guided process. It's more of a natural result of internal shifts that manifest through the music. We've pulled back on the vocals because the music itself should take center stage, not the voice. Words are fleeting - sound remains. What will always stay constant is the devastating, suffocating heaviness - that's the foundation of our work. We're not trying to establish a "recognizable sound". Recognition isn't the goal. The aim is to continuously channel decay, emptiness, and the absurdity of existence. If the music changes, it's because decay itself moves in waves - not because we planned it.

What does your music deal with? What are your sources of inspiration?

Alienation. Depression. Misanthropy. The pessimism of a consciousness that sees too clearly. It's the soundtrack to disillusionment - a sonic rejection of life itself. We draw from inner conflicts, from the contempt for human existence. There's no hero's journey here, no redemption. Just the ongoing rot within one's own flesh, fully aware of the futility of all things.

I preferred the cover artwork of your debut ep over the one of your debut album, because the lone tree with this planetary disk and the colour scheme helped to set a certain mood. "Inner Ruin" on the other hand comes with the top half of a skeleton. What would be the role of this visual aspect in terms of your music?
The cover of Heights of Negation is meant to evoke feelings of isolation, alienation, and grief. The lone tree, standing under an eclipse, reflects the insignificance of life against the vast, uncaring void. In contrast, Inner Ruin focuses directly on death and the longing for an end. The skeletal remains aren't just a symbol of mortality - they are a testament to the inevitability of decay, the unavoidable fate that strips everything down to its bare, lifeless core. Carcass Captivity continues this journey. It represents the idea that all living beings are trapped within their fleshly prisons, condemned to suffer until they reach the end - until they dissolve into nothingness, returning to the void from which they came.

You have a release scheduled to be out in early 2025. Can you write a but about it? How does it differ from the previous ones?
Carcass Captivity was released on January 24, 2025. It continues the journey set forth by our previous albums, not with the intention of reinventing ourselves or creating something entirely new, but as a natural progression of the same existential decay we've always embraced. There's no ambition to stand apart from others or even from our past works. We don't approach new releases with a checklist of how to sound different. Instead, Carcass Captivity is another manifestation of the same bleak vision - a deepening of the wound, not a healing of it. The foundation remains: oppressive heaviness, suffocating atmosphere, and an unwavering focus on the inevitability of suffering and death. Evolution is irrelevant when the destination is always the same - oblivion.

What would be your opinion on AI and music?
Art is an expression of humanity - which means it's flawed, contradictory, and painful. AI-generated music is the final proof that our era's decadence knows no bounds. When music becomes an algorithm, a mass-produced commodity, it's dead. Perhaps this is humanity's ultimate form of hubris: to replace itself with machines, to finally feel nothing at all.

Closing comments
We thank those who find something in our music that goes beyond mere sound. For those who resonate with Desperation Eclipse, no explanation is needed. The rest is silence. Worship death.

Oldest Sea

Who are you and where are you from?

Sam: Oldest Sea from rural New Jersey

Is there any special meaning behind the band name? Is it a reference to a real place?

Sam: Yes Oldest Sea is a reference to Panthalassa, which was the super ocean that surrounded Pangaea.

Judging from the various images that can be found from your band, be these cover artworks of the releases or band photos, it appears that a certain "impression of rural" should be invoked. What would be the idea behind these and how does the music fit into this?

Sam: We live in a rural area and generally feel more connected to nature than urban environments. The natural world is one of the things that inspire my writing the most.

Maybe it is a bit of a long shot, but would one not expect a slightly larger focus on traditional instruments, given how the music is presented? Is this something you have considered and maybe even plan to do at some point?

Sam: Yes. I'm sure we'll experiment with all kinds of instruments at some point.

How would you describe your music?

Sam: I think right now it could be described as Dark Americana with some heaviness. I say "right now" because I try not to adhere to a certain genre; I see that as restrictive and creatively stifling. This project will evolve into whatever it organically evolves into.

It is not too common to have a female vocalist playing in a band whose music can be described as funeral doom metal at times. How did this happen? What is it that a female vocalist can add to such extreme music? And please do not give me that "female touch".

Sam: I want the listener to feel my specific brand of feminine sorrow, my vulnerability, my anger, my softness, my pain etc. For me the most effective way to convey these raw emotions is with my voice.

Judging from the music that I have heard from you, there are rarely passages of intense growls or harsh screams. Why do these have hardly any place in your music?

Andrew: We love dynamics. There is a much higher dynamic range with clean singing. We love extreme music that is constantly flatlined at a 10 out of 10 on the dynamic range/loudness scale, so we add screams occasionally. We also love music that starts at 1 and builds to 10. We can only achieve this with a varied vocal approach.

Also, in general, clean vocals in extreme music are not common and they are often second-rate. We are trying to bring a different vocal style to extreme music.

What would be the starting point for you? Lyrics or riffs?

Andrew: Our songs always start with a guitar or piano riff. We often translate piano parts to guitar so that we can easily recreate the sound at live shows. Lyrics and vocal melodies might be the most important part of our music, but they are always the last element to be added in our song writing process.

What does inspire you and what would be your sources in terms of the lyrics?

Sam: Right now I write mostly about personal trauma.

Your debut album "A Birdsong, A Ghost" had been the starting point for me to take a dive into your music. Can you write a bit about the idea behind it and the music that can be found on it. Especially also how it differs from the other singles/eps of yours.

Sam: I came across the last known recording of a bird native to Hawaii known as the Kauai O'o, who was declared extinct in 1989," Samantha Marandola tells Decibel. "The audio was from 1987, and it was of a male calling out to a mate not knowing he was the last of his species. There was something so profoundly heartbreaking about hearing this otherwise prosaic birdsong. That album is expression of feminine rage, grief, loneliness, and transformation. But it's also a howl into the emptiness – a birdsong. I think this album differs from the previous releases because I kind of felt like Andrew and I arrived at a place sonically where the musical groundwork of Oldest Sea had already been laid, and with this album we could start the fun experimental part of it. I also felt like I gave myself permission to be more bold and maybe more raw with my songwriting as well as vocal delivery.

And could you elaborate a bit on the cover artwork of "A Birdsong, A Ghost" and its place in the music? Is it your horse?

Sam: I just like the way it looked honestly. It has a sort of dark Americana energy and that's something I connect with. It's not my horse, though, I would love to have my own horse one day. Or maybe a donkey.

I find your music captivating and disturbing at the same time. In my review I place it in-between Earth and Nortt, with the former representing the vastness of the music and the atmosphere, while the latter represents the desolation and the depressive elements apparent in the tracks as well as the minimalism in the expression. What is it that you want to invoke the head of the listener? Where do you place yourself in terms of the genre and other bands; especially of the funeral doom metal genre?

Andrew: Thus far, we have mixed all of our own records. We eliminate a lot of the "warmer frequencies" in the guitars and vocals to create a more icy and desolate sound. This, along with the sense of open space that reverb creates, invokes rural winter landscapes to us. I would imagine this is not unsimilar from a lot of the classic Finnish Funeral Doom bands, however, we do not consider ourselves a "traditional" Funeral Doom band. While we draw a lot from the genre, we also equally explore other types of music. Our focus is on creating interesting sounds, not strictly adhering to genre conventions.

What kind of music do you generally listen to and how do these choices contribute to the crafting of your own songs?

Andrew: We are attracted to music that genuinely conveys "negative emotion." This covers a lot of ground. Anything from melancholic ambient music and film scores to malevolent black metal. Some of our songs take equal influence from Thergothon, Jason Molina, Harold Budd and second wave black metal. This feels very natural to us because they all seem to be conveying the same emotions.

Silence is an element in your music it seems. What does it add to it and do you find it difficult to add it to songs?

Andrew: One of biggest influences is music from films. Film score composers like John Carpenter, Pino Donaggio, Ennio Morricone, and Bernard Herrmann all regularly use dynamic shifts and silence to build the appropriate atmosphere. Many of our songs follow a three-act structure, similar to that of a traditional film. We are very comfortable using silence and other film tools from film to construct a cinematic tone.

What would be your opinion on AI and music?

Andrew: I'm sure AI music will soon be indistinguishable from human made music. I'm interested in music that comes from the real human experience of anger, pain, melancholy, rage, etc. There is a lot of music made by human beings that is just as devoid of these things as AI music. I'm not interested in any music that is disingenuous. I'm not interested in music for the sake of music.

Pythonissam

Who are you, and where are you from?

DJ: I'm Derek, aka DJ. We are a two-piece project from the north-midwest of the USA, I live in Wisconsin, have lived in many states around the US over the years, but this is home for me.

FG: Foster, sometimes I go by Bukavac, a name I came up with from my black metal days- I haven't made or really listened to much black metal in a while now so I use that name a bit less. Sometimes it's nice to be a bit anonymous though. I was born in Virginia Beach. I grew up outside of Baltimore Maryland and now I live in Jamestown, North Dakota

You are not too far off from your five-year anniversary. Why don't you write a bit about the history of the band?

DJ: Crazy how time flies haha! We had originally met years ago through Soundcloud and had done some collaborations with our respective solo projects (Bukavac and Tahazu) alongside developing a friendship and just getting along well.

So we decided to start Pythonissam, both having a love for Doom Metal and Funeral Doom (Ahab, Bell Witch, Bvried at Sea, Bongripper, Conan, etc.) we wanted to get our ideas out.

FG: One day Derek hit me up and asked if I wanted to work on a psychedelic funeral doom project, I thought about it for a whole three seconds and was like fuck yeah! We had teamed up in the past so we already knew each other's work flows and everything came together pretty fast. We changed up our writing style with Transcending, but really it was kind of like going back to our pre Pythonissam days.

Only with this project Derek contributes a lot of different layers with guitars, percussion, and other weirdness along with the lyrics and vocals.

5 years! I didn't even realize we had been at this project for that long.

The title of your releases gives it away: Lovecraft and the universe he created through his writings are what your music deals with. Why did you pick him?

FG: I would have to credit Derek with that one. I like Lovecraftian themes and a lot of the concepts but I can't really call myself a big Lovecraft fan. I like a lot of his works more than others and some I couldn't even finish.

I think his style of writing just feels a bit dated to me. His writings really work for death metal or metal in general, I know we aren't the first to do it– he is the OG of cosmic horror!

DJ: I've always loved that Cosmic Horror genre of stories and films, the elements of both mystery and horror in a scale beyond what you see in typical fashion is just awe-inducing and otherworldly (not to be cliche).

What would be your favourite novels of his?

FG: The Beast In The Cave and Dagon. If I recall, The Beast In The Cave is kind of Matheson-like. Similar to the ending of I Am Legend, dude finds out he is actually the beast in the cave.

And Dagon is some poor bastard teleported to some wasteland ruled by an ancient god. What's not to love?

DJ: Definitely the Call of Cthulhu, Dagon, At the Mountains of Madness, and The Colour Out of Space. I like them all but those are some of my choice picks.

Aside from the lyrics, what influences can be found in the music?

DJ: We really like to implement "color in sound" so to speak as much as the ritualistic feeling and nature of the Cultist caricatures, so we take great lengths to implement a fusion of those styles and elements. We use a mix of Keys/ Synths, Sampling, and Traditional Instruments (Shaman Drum, Sticks, Nut Shakers, etc.) to get a really wide range of capability and accomplish that.

FG: I went down a rabbit hole studying horror themed music, I couldn't play a video game or watch a horror movie without actively listening to the soundtrack. A lot of that is in the synth work– layers and layers of synth that try to capture the weird scariness of Lovecraft. But still try and make it go somewhere musically and not just be layers of weird sounds. Also my love for HM2 pedals, that's been in there since the second album Transcending.

How do Lovecraft and funeral doom metal go hand in hand?

DJ: There's just something about a grand sound that just fits to the scale and power of the many stories and expanded genre universe. Doom is such a diverse subgenre that you don't have a lot of atypical limitations that are expected.

FG: Lol they don't. Lovecraft is cosmic horror and insanity, Funeral Doom is usually about themes of sadness, loss, or just all around crushing depression.

I think they do meet in a place where the old gods have returned and the world is basically dead now, that sucks, something to be depressed about I suppose.

I also really like the idea of a cultist that realizes he really fucked up– now he has to come face to face with the consequences of serving a dark uncaring master who sees everyone he knows and loves as ants, so regret, sorrow, weirdness, and horror are all present there.

Why do you play music that has a certain amount of non-metal elements in them? How do you place your band amongst the plethora of other bands of this genre?

FG: I'm just a big fan of Doom music, always have been. I feel that slower music is heavier and I get tired of trem picking over blast beats. Most of my favorite bands are stoner doom, sludge, progressive sludgy stuff, or crust punk/D beat.

I try not to compare myself to other musicians or artists because they are all better than me! But bands like Ahab I will look up the tabs to and see how they create those sounds and emotions.

As for psychedelic funeral doom, I'm not sure that's too big of a sub sub sub genre, someone else had to have done it before us, I just don't know who.

DJ: I think the ability to infuse various styles and influences with cognizance can really make something special and just awesome to listen to. Definitely think we fit well in the genre with both bands we love listening to and those also making a name for themselves in the scene, but can stand out with the aforementioned style infusion that makes it unique and pulls the listeners back time and time again.

Just to throw something at you, but should music that is influenced by this writer not attempt to display a level of insanity or weirdness?

FG: We get this a lot. I think a lot of people expect doom grind or something like Squid Pisser slowed to a crawl, and as I type that I realize that would be really cool but not exactly the kind of music I want to write- it's psychedelic funeral doom.

So long as it's slow,heavy, sad, and weird I'm happy. I think on a lot of the tracks we capture the weirdness, the psychedelic elements have slowly become more prominent and a lot of our sound is kind of ritualistic with different percussive elements.

It seems we just get weirder with every release.

DJ: Lovecraft has a wide range of story types, many which do have those thematic elements, and that makes it awesome haha! The creatures or events can be weird as hell, as much as the insanity of main characters and antagonists – that's all fuel and inspiration for wild and great tunes.

While the first two releases of yours have artworks by Marios Kerpen, the ones on the latest two releases were done by the band member Derek Jacobsen. Why did this switch happen?

DJ: Marios is a good dude and we love working with him for artwork commissions, I also do a lot of art and graphic design and such too so it's fun to go back and forth using a range of art styles and color and other nuances. We'll definitely do more with him again, but I'll also be doing more of the designs and layouts too.

FG: I don't do much with the artwork at all. I might send a suggestion or use AI to make an idea for an album cover but 99.74% of the time I like Derek's idea more. Marios's artwork is awesome and I'd love to use it more but it's not cheap.

I don't want to give anyone the idea that I had anything to do with the album art including paying Marios for his work– in my opinion if I didn't help pay for it I shouldn't have a say in it, but I plan to continue to put forward god awful ideas for album covers for future releases.

There is also a change in style. With the earlier ones appear rather mystical, the latest one presents a version of Cthulhu on the cover. Nice attempt to instantly grab the attention of the "innocent viewer". Worked for me, at least.

DJ: Haha thanks, yeah we just wanted to get the visual themes right and in correlation to the musical ones, so it worked out well.

FG: If it works it works!

Leaving the visual aspects aside, there is also one in the music. Your earlier albums, those with the different visual style, come with a different take on funeral doom metal. Could you lay out the evolution from somewhat minimalist and raw music to what you are currently playing?

FG: For the first album Derek sent me tracks with rhythm guitar and drums, I then played bass and layered more guitars on the track. From Transcending onward I do most of the basic guitars, drums, and bass. That would probably explain the biggest change from a writing standpoint, I'm not very good at figuring out what key a song is in or hearing what chord or note is being played, so it's a lot easier for me to do what parts I come up with and then send it to Derek for his parts.

For the newer stuff I try to write with more minor toned melodies in mind rather than just heavy grooves and such, we also seem to use more and more synths now and our songs have grown into a collection of tracks that my poor DAW can't seem to handle haha, I also think the low end of the bass up front in the mix has always been a main ingredient to our sound. As for the rawness, I guess I got better at mixing and mastering.

DJ: Like any band who likes to experiment and implement different styles and influences, we are always trying different things while pushing to improve and expand our capabilities and quality, while being apt to the various themes.

From your perspective, what would be the core differences here?

FG: For me it's the shift from psychedelic guitars and the occasional synth to all out horror themed arrangements. It's actually a lot of fun to "compose" horror themed music and we try to keep it in the world of weird.

DJ: Not too terribly much besides just trying different techniques for really cool horror and cosmic-psychedelic atmospheres, adding instrumentation and effects, and getting more polished with mix and general production.

Do you know the comic series "The Unspeakable Vault of Doom"? They might be your thing, actually.

DJ: I have seen it, yeah! Pretty cool series, I need to read more of it haha.

FG: I've never heard of it, I'll have to check it out.

What would be your opinion on AI and music?

DJ: Musically, I don't like and don't think AI should be used at all, it takes any organic and human/ creature element out of what is a human language. Artistically/ for visual art uses, it can be effective with the improvement of tools out there to adequately get the visual aesthetic a band is looking for. There's plenty of bands out there using AI for visual art now, and it looks good for the most part; there should always be some effort to refine the art to accomplish the goals of the band (editing, color correction, etc.)– and that's coming from a graphic designer who does use AI art from time to time, it is another tool in the toolbox for a band to use, especially if they are on a limited budget and can't afford a commission, or just want something a little more bizarre, a number of things.

FG: AI is going to take all of our jobs! In all seriousness I have no idea what the future holds, I would be surprised if AI anything continued to be free, I am surprised it's free now! Something that advanced and cool is just free for everyone to use? I think that AI will continue to change every entertainment industry whose purpose is making a profit off a product, at the end of the day free is always the cheapest labor, and the better the robots get the harder it will be for writers, soundtrack composers, musicians, and quite possibly actors to have a career. Why would they pay someone when an app on your phone can do it for free? Everyone will still make art though, creativity and expression is just in us as humans, I can't fathom people stop painting, drawing,writing stories and novels, or playing an instrument just because it's nearly impossible to make a career out of it. We will have to see where artists go and how they put their art into the world. I think with music, social media has changed the music industry; Streaming services, platforms, and algorithms have become some of the best promotional tools, so the next evolution of social media could impact music or the music industry just as much as AI. The places people listen to music or consume it has changed drastically first with the internet and then again with social media, so who knows how we will be listening to music or who will be making it in the not so distant future.

Closing comments

FG: Thanks for listening to our music and taking the time to do this interview. I'm excited and honored to be included! I'll have to check it out when it drops!

DJ: Thanks for talking with us, we are super appreciative of you and all of our fans/ listeners and friends out there who enjoy our music, there is much more to come. Doom on!!!

Rale

Who are you and role do you have in the band? Where are you from?

Ian: I'm Ian Worz. I play bass, do some back up Vox, and so far, have recorded and mixed all of our output. I'm from St. Augustine, FL.

Keith: My name is Keith Kozelka. I grew up in Connecticut, spent some time in Florida (including death metal capital Tampa), before moving to North Carolina where Rale started. I am the rhythm guitarist, main writer, and lyricist.

Who started it and why? What made you start the band and play this particular kind of metal?

Keith: Since late 2016, I was motivated to express what I was feeling in response to the disturbing turn of world events in the form of death metal. There is something to it's dark, heavy, complex sound that rose to the moment and made sense of it all. All the songs that would end up on the demo had their genesis from around that time. After a couple years of trying to get a project off the ground, I finally caught my break in 2019, responding to an ad Ian put out to start a death/black metal band. It started off as a two-man project before building to a full line up later that year.

Rale. What does your band name refer to? I find several intriguing medical explanations[1].

Ian: You're correct. It's a symptom of lung ailments. To my imagination, it evokes thoughts of a death rattle... and I like simple one-word band names.

Is there a connection between the logo and your band name? Is there ahead behind your band name?

Ian: Yeah. I designed the logo, and have played with it for each release, but if you look at the first version on the 2020 Demo, you can see pretty clearly that the tops of the first three letters make up teeth and a tongue, and the concentric semicircles above them make for an implied exhalation or sound. That motif has stayed with each iteration, but I think it's become a little more obscured.

The cover artwork on your first ep Psychic Devastation reminds on the architectural style of Brutalism. Why did you pick this image... an image, which I tried to relate to a real building by the way. While writing the review back then I really took a dive into the absurd world of brutalist architecture. I needed to get this off my chest.

Ian: I was pretty fortunate to grow up with a strong education in art history and when I went to university it made sense to keep up with that. All of that has helped me out with a historical awareness of style.

If I recall correctly, at the time that we started discussing aesthetics for the EP, I suggested something architectural, maybe even something as specific as brutalism... just some motif that hadn't been beaten to death in Death Metal. I think Keith found that image, and once I saw it, I thought it was appropriately staunch and haunting. I think it resonates with most of the material on that release. It's alienating whilst maintaining intrigue.

Keith: As far as that specific image, the fact that nobody can seem to answer the "who? what? where?" regarding this apparently real picture lends it an eeriness that appealed to me. Being an unknown band, I wanted our cover art to stand out from what other bands were doing.

Your lyrics are not particularly happy. What does your tracks deal with and why did you pick these topics.

Keith: The folly of humanity is a recurring theme throughout Rale's music, because it is what I understand best. For instance, Eyes of Pripyat is obviously about Chernobyl on a topical level, but it also speaks to how these powerful things of our creation catastrophically escape our control when it interacts with our stupidity, laziness and arrogance.

The Metal Archives lists only two active members in terms of your band. Why did the others leave and do you think about recruiting more musicians?

[1] `https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/rale`

Keith: They are going to have to update that again, because we are back to a five piece with 4 of the 5 members the same. We have a new drummer now. I disbanded the line-up for a brief period to give myself time to make some decisions on personnel that needed to be addressed. I feel extremely fortunate to have the people we have now, because everybody is super talented and brings their own interpretation to the music. Rale wouldn't be what it is without everyone's contributions.

According to you, what would be the core essences of your music?

Ian: I think it's changed over time, and it's still changing, but some sense of melody is pretty big for us. I'll let Keith do the heavy lifting here.

Keith: Heaviness is the essence of our music, but I think there are many ways to achieve it. It's important to me that we don't fall into cliches. What helps me with that is writing is along a throughline of melody and harmonic structures, with more brutal ideas punctuating that. I think it comes together in a band context as something that has a lot of dimensions to it, and it actively engages the listener. It's not just a salad of disconnected riffs.

Do you prefer more modern death metal or rather old-school stuff?

Ian: I tend to dig modern stuff more. I really enjoy bands that compose melodically complex pieces with odd voicing. The stuff that keeps me coming back is usually a little less riff-based and more structurally minded, although I'm not opposed to a real knuckle dragger of an Obituary riff now and then.

Keith: I enjoy the whole spectrum of death metal, and metal in general, but I think the old school has an understanding into what makes death metal great that modern bands may sometimes forget. Vitriol is a great example of a band that embodies the best of both worlds for me.

What bands would you refer to as influences?

Ian: Gorguts, Thantifaxath, Artificial Brain, Suffering Hour, Aosoth, stuff that now that I think about it, we don't sound like at all hahaha.

Keith: In the beginning I brought a lot of the usual OSDM stuff into our sound: Morbid Angel, Bolt Thrower, Incantation, Immolation, Dismember, etc. But honestly, I am like a sponge in that I will absorb anything that I am listening to at the time, and it will come out in our music. Ian's taste for weirdo metal has rubbed off on me, along with lots of non-metal stuff I have enjoyed over the years like Kemasi Washington, Swans and Dead Can Dance.

What are your experiences regarding streaming? What is your opinion on Spotify or Bandcamp?

Ian: Spotify sucks. Virtually all of the larger streaming platforms suck for a band of our size. For a small band like us, Bandcamp is 100% the way to go. We get over 300% more plays on Bandcamp than Spotify and Apple Music combined and if someone likes the material, they can actually pay us something for it. The revenue sharing on the big platforms is pitiful.

Keith: Bandcamp is the only platform that made me feel connected to an audience during a time when we couldn't play shows due to the pandemic. The fact that we can make a little money off it is cool, but I don't really care about that.

Are there venues where music can listen to live performances or do you have to travel abroad for it?

Keith: We played two shows at a local Raleigh venue called the Maywood before COVID shut down everything. We hope to soon start playing live shows again locally and regionally.

How can people contact you? Where can people listen to your music? Any concerts forthcoming?

Keith: Bandcamp is the preferred platform, but we also do Instagram.

You can listen to us out at `https://ralenc.bandcamp.com/`. We hope to be playing shows soon.

Closing comments, if you want ...

Ian: Thank you for taking the time to ask us some questions!

Keith: Thanks for doing this interview. Rale is just getting started. Stay tuned!

Urtar

Who are you and role do you have in the band? Where are you from?
Hello there, my name is Atris and I am the guitar player and the main composer of Urtar. We hail from Tirana, Albania.

Who started it and why? What made you start the band and play this particular kind of metal?
We had a need to play some extreme mixture of thrash/death/black. At that time (2016) me and the bassist Baltion where playing with a local death metal band Aten. While we have grown separately listening to most of the extreme metal scene from Europe, Scandinavia, USA etc., ultimately it was a joint decision by me and our vocalist/bassist Baltion and immediately we found our drummer Pol, who is a long-time friend of Baltion.

Your band name appears to derive from the Albanian word urtë, which translates to sage, wise, silent[2]. The noun of it would be Urt, while Urtar would be an Albanian name. Is this line of reasoning correct? Is such a person depicted on the cover artwork?
Yes your etymology is correct. Urtar is also a noun in itself in Albanian, meaning a wise elder who presides over various matters of organization of life, and who in the context of the band, as also depicted in the artwork, is also a seer and keeper of old knowledge (of life itself and the stars). Usually he stands alone in select mountains and oversees the development of worlds.

When someone sees your logo, one might imagine music like Mysticum or Myrkskog, music that has a certain industrial sound and clinic touch. Well, what made you pick this kind of logo?
The logo is a depiction of an astral feature, basically a beacon of an old knowledge that was suppressed by various religions after a certain calamity but which is slowly regaining ground with the newer developments of technology.

How would you describe your music?
An aggressive, blackish, atmospheric, doomish mixture, a combination of thrash/black/death metal.

Most of your tracks are rather long, except for the intro and the cover version, and none these is shorter than seven minutes. What is the reason and idea behind such long compositions?
As a composer I see my music as a river, it begins somewhere and ends somewhere else, it's like a journey where you can experience various emotions.

How do you approach the song-writing in this regard? How do you keep up the tension and atmosphere in them?
Music for us is a way of channeling our emotions. As I mentioned before, it's like a journey where you can experience various emotions, this is not something only for the listener, but for us as well.

How long did it take you to get the album done? The band was started in 2016 and some years have passed since and only in 2021 the first output has seen the light of day. Did you scrape a lot of ideas? Somehow one might imagine that you still have a lot of stuff that only waits to see the light of day.
We composed the songs somehow quick I must say, we played in 2016 a live concert in our hometown Tirana, but we had some setbacks while our vocalist/bassist Baltion moved to Australia, so part of the recordings were done here, other parts and mix-master took place in his studio in Australia.

Is it the lyrics or is it a riff that is the part with which you start composing a song?
For this album we composed the music first.

The three tracks main are not easy stuff and definitely not readily accessible. They are a complex set of facets and style. Do you break down the tracks in parts or it is more like a flow from the beginning to the end, with little references to earlier parts? What bands have inspired you in terms of song-writing and arrangements?
The composition worked the same like the river going forward, and sometimes meeting the earlier parts. It's easier to mention the scene rather than the bands (because there have been many). Early scene of black metal such as Bathory, Samael etc., to later Scandinavian and northern black metal scene like Dødheimsgard, Mayhem,

[2] `https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/urt%C3%AB`

Emperor, Dissection, Arcturus, Dark Fortress, Nargaroth etc., and surely American and European death metal (old and new school). Surely we have other influences such as classical music and all of the separate experiences that we have as individuals.

What bands or albums are something you like to listen to now and then?
Sarcofago - The Laws of Scourge
Tartaros - The Red Jewel
Primordial – Spirit the Earth Aflame
Antaeus – Cut Your Flesh and Worship Satan
Limbonic Art – In Abhorrence Dementia

Rammstein's Benzin appears as a cover song on your debut release. What made you pick this particular track? How would you describe your interpretation of it and how differs it from the original.
Well I and Baltion have a thing for Rammstein, and Bezin is a raw and brutal song as it is. He as well has lived in Germany for many years, so it was easy for him to pronounce the German language. The main riff of the song is almost exactly the same; we covered the song in our own style and arranged it as an extreme metal song.

Albania has a rather small metal scene. Can you write a bit about it? How does your band fit into it?
Metal music in general is not very popular in Albania, because most people here are not drawn to metal music; media as well is not in our favor, neither have we had any metal magazines or e-zines. We just play this kind of music because this is our choice despite of the above, and we like to leave our mark in metal community worldwide.

Are there venues where music can listen to live performances or do you have to travel abroad for it?
There are a couple of places where you can perform live here, but if we need to approach a broader audience we have to travel abroad.

How can people contact you? Where can people listen to your music? Any concerts forthcoming?
Well anyone can find us in every music platform from YouTube, Spotify etc. For the moment being we do not have any shows scheduled, while we are not living in the same state altogether anymore.

Closing comments, if you want ...
Thank you for this interview, and hope everybody enjoys our album. Cheers

Reviews

Ceara Conway – CAOIN

This release is above the league that I am normally used to. Generally above what I would tend to cover in this and any of my magazines. Though, considering that I dare to write about music from the folk genre as well as music that lies a bit outside my normal routine, why not write some lines about this album as well? Why do I think that "CAOIN" - why the screaming caps? - is above my league? Well, all you need to do is have a look at Ceara Conway's homepage. She has been rather busy, and people have been busy praising her art and enabling even other and more people to have a look at her art. Yes, art. Not only some mere Irish vocal stuff like it can be found on this album, thankfully without the endlessly cheerful or tormenting fiddle tunes, no, she has also had – is this the right verb? – some art exhibitions in various countries and on several continents. The same would be true of Marion Grébert[3], whose music I had written about some time ago. She has been more than just a bit busy as well. I am just some dude who works at a place and who does pottery in his free time, and who has written some reviews and stuff for way too many years by now. I do not and will never ever reach their heights. Oddly enough, both of these women's releases have something in common: their stare on their cover artwork. Their judging look. Their look into your soul. They know, and you know.

Let us get into it. What is "CAOIN", can this word be whispered?, all about? The Bandcamp page can help in this regard, because on it, Ceara Conway has written about the concept and idea behind this release. It contains "Irish traditional sean nós songs that have melodies and narratives expressing feelings of loss, longing, and the sensibility of the 'cry.' Within "CAOIN" you will hear laments (caointe) alongside praise songs, love songs, and lullabies". Combine this with what had been written above in terms of the instrumentation, and one gets a limited idea of what the songs might sound like. One voice with some stuff added to it in order to give it volume and depth. Unlike in terms of Clumen, only one voice is to be found here. Furthermore, and in order to throw some other name into the "ring," it reminds a bit of Kamila Ovv, whose music I not only have written about, but also with whom I had done an interview. While there are similarities between Ceara Conway and her, the differences cannot be mistaken or cast aside. The atmosphere, the character and the style differ considerably. "CAOIN" - no, I do not refrain from the "screaming" - can be placed somewhere between the music of Clumen and Kamilla Ovv[4].

It is a difficult release, and the reasons for this can be found in the previous paragraph. It appears that the music is more of a reminiscence or statement than an attempt to engage people. "Amhrán an Bhá" for instance, has only her part. Only hers. Nothing else. No instrument. No counterpoint. Only her. This is what she and Kamilla Ovv have in common. The devastating intimacy that each of them creates excludes the listener. One can sit there aghast about the presentation, about the musical intensity, the expression done by the vocals, but it is not possible to join. And even when an organ makes a vague appearance - not a real one from a church, sadly - like in the track "An tSailchuach" it feels as if the combined elements in the music would spin somewhere else, and they do not want anyone to partake in it. And this, even though the sound and character have less of the earlier discussed character's devastating effect, still hovers around it and appears or attempts to evade the listener. Over the course of the release, a variety of instruments make an appearance, but they all are nothing more than a small addendum than something that could carry the ideas and the motifs of a track alone. A clarinet, a piano, a cello and others are allowed to have their share of the music. While Irish music is all too often associated with something cheerful and too much beer, this one is a sobered-down version of this. Intimately nuanced, accentuated, varied, and always with a distance towards the person, attentively attempting to grasp some part of what is actually filling the surrounding air.

It is a difficult release. Somehow, it appears to be a presentation of something in line of with what may be described as "oral tradition." Of pieces or narrations that need to be or that should be passed down from one generation over to the next. It is these that you need to listen to attentively to and with a considerable amount of patience as well as attentiveness, as it is up to oneself to take up the banner and to continue the narration and the presentation of the ancient texts onwards. Such pieces do not need to be cheerful; they do not need to be engaging, yet due to their distant nature, they feel alien somehow, fallen out of time somehow.

Thanks to modern electronics, the means of the printing press, the burden of this task has lessened, yet it is still something that needs to be fulfilled and must be dealt with. And this is probably part of the bottom line of this release. Maybe that is what her stare is about. You need to continue on this path. Continue to carry the banner. Continue the narration. Someone has to do it.

You can find the release here:
`https://cearaconway.bandcamp.com/album/caoin-2`

[3]Written about in The unknown ones (issue 1) `https://payhip.com/b/UWFC1`
[4]Written about in The unknown ones (issue 3) `https://payhip.com/b/JHmKQ`

Clume – Clume

Traditional progressive polyphone music from Saint Étienne or how to do some word juggling by using the tags provided by the band for their eponymous release on the corresponding Bandcamp profile. And this is what you get over the course of this album and in each of the six tracks. Three women, and at times even four, sing. Occasionally with some small accompanying instrument, but the main focus is always on the vocals. And as this band is from France, it is not much of a surprise that the lyrics are all in French.

The most bewildering aspect of this release is the impression it leaves, once all is over. Somehow, the question arises: "What did just happen?" Six tracks and slightly less than thirty minutes are all that it takes to create a whirlwind of pinpricks. The music really feels as if it wants to nudge you and prick you and shove you in a certain direction. These ludicrously few elements appear in an odd as well as in a disturbingly skilful executed kind of manner. Moments of underwhelming utterances of single letters, like in case of the "Aaaaaa" in "Les remèdes", which is not to be confused with the "Aaaaaargghh" of the "Black Beast of Aaaaargghh", which appears in the movie "Monty Python and the Holy Grail", evolve over the course of the track not into the "Bbbbbb", but a rather captivating melody of contrasting voices. Noteworthy in this regard are also the drone textures, whose appearance might come as a bit of a surprise, though their sound is definitely able to add something to the compositions; "La pluie", "Tres còps de trompeta". But how can be vocal performances be described outside the utterances of single letters? Just to make one thing clear: they are all able to pronounce words properly and can finish sentences.

The way or style of the expression varies according to the track, which should not come as a surprise. It is the vocals that fill the space. Sometimes intense and each voice battling for dominance as well as attention. At other ones, like heads stuck together and rather intimately whispering, hushing, murmuring the melodies, the texts, the sounds. Intriguing is the word. Their approach differs from what Heilung offers, where the overall character of the music and how it is perceived, is the result of the interplay of the various elements: vocals and instruments. Clume, as they have not a focus on such an overarching conceptual idea, are more traditional in this regard, while (probably) adding modern musical elements to their approach. The voices are really nice and create together a harmonious voluminous warm sound. They flow nice. Their sound hovers in the air. Drone elements play a role. Sound textures play a role. "La pluie" as well as "L'embelinament" are an example for this.

Something needs to be said of the instruments as well. The hastily played bell in the opener is a nice addition, because it sets a surprising counterpoint. Yes, alright, this is an enormous embellishment of its actual part in the track, but it is still worth mentioning. Why? Well, facets like these are important. They can help one remember music, and they set the spark for the anticipation of its sound, of its reoccurrence.

Music with a positive vibe, even though the lyrics are not as shallow as one might suspect. At times, it is a kind of "comfort music", but it does not always fill this role appropriately. Nevertheless, Clume by Clume is a charming, warm and cheerful release. Full of interesting melodies, battling of voices, hardly any melancholy and some surprising moments of counterpoints.

I suspect that this kind of music is best enjoyed live and on stage.

You can find the release here:

`https://clume.bandcamp.com/album/clume`

Cœur de pirate – en cas de tempête, ce jardin sera fermé.

Of all of her releases, this is the only one that I like. It is the way it is. Maybe it is the sound, maybe it is the atmosphere, maybe it is the overall flow of the music, but the other ones never ever leaving an impression that I should even take a proper dive into them. Mere glimpses into these make me shy away from them in an instance. And I never ever even dare to return to them for another attempt. "En cas de tempête, ce jardin sera fermé." is able to leave a spark. It leaves a certain warmth and a nice feeling due to the tracks and the atmosphere. So, why not write a review about it?

It is pop music, alright. Bite size tracks, which do not fuss around much. Music that is not crammed with unnecessary extravaganza, but with a level of honesty and down the Earth attitude. It really wants to give you a new angle and a new perspective. Something to look up from and to establish a new vantage point. Ah, yes, the cover artwork. The indication and the never ever provision of a full revelation of it all. You can search and see, but here, you can only guess. "en cas de tempête, ce jardin sera fermé", brings up more questions than answers, doesn't it? A warning? A threat? A resigned exclamation? Which brings up again the aspect of revealing only part of the truth, part of what it all (actually) means, while the rest can only be assumed. Guessed. Speculated about.

"Somnambule" opens in a nice kind of way, it has an indication of playfulness, but stops right at the start and refuses to wander off too far. It is just enough to get going. Just enough energy to lead over to the

main part of the track. Or is Béatrice Martin just lazy? This entire track feels somewhat reduced and kept at bay. This album has no opening in a grand, overwhelming kind of way. While not tired and definitely not hallucinatory, the awareness to present it in such an ordinary as well conventional kind of way, is weird in some respect. Apparently, she is not familiar with the book "The Nocturnal Brain: Nightmares, Neuroscience, and the Secret World of Sleep" by Dr. Guy Leschziner, which reveals some of the wondrous things people do at night, also as a "Somnambule". What is it you say? The book came out a year after this album had seen the light of day? Details. It seems to be the case that she had no "Prémonition", which would be the title of track number two. We are on a roller coaster of comedy here.

It is with this one that the album really gets going. Not right away and with a bang, but the shift can immediately be recognized and identified. And it is also there that you can experience what makes this release fascinating: playfulness. It is nice how the piano sets the pace, how additional electronic elements add further momentum, and how the vocals fit into this. Coherence is the keyword in this regard. Yes, Béatrice Martin plays the "normal" card and there are no surprising or even daring approaches in terms of sound or songwriting. Instead, the listener is provided with a well executed, well-balanced, well performed assortment of pop songs, which are really enjoyable and exceedingly catchy. The music does its part very well and amplifies the vocals in a proper kind of way. Yes, there are hardly any moments in which she does not shut up, but this is an all too common feature in music of this genre.

Each of the tracks has a slightly different take on the overall approach, except for "Dans la nuit (feat. Loud)". And as can be seen from the title, she recruited some guest musician for the vocals here and his performance is some kind of hip/hop or is this rap? I do not know, but it is generally quite annoying. The only thing that I can listen to that comes remotely to this musical genre is Body Count.

Ten times of nearly three minutes is nearly the entire length of the release. Ten times somewhat different music, unmistakably the same, though varied in a way that it all refuses to be a burden. Initially cheerful, the end is muted, somewhat tired and exhausted. Maybe that is why she lay down. It is a good and entertaining release, though.

You can find the release here:
`https://musique.coeurdepirate.com/album/en-cas-de-temp-te-ce-jardin-sera-ferm`

Deliver The Suffering – Unleash The Chaos (EP)

No introduction, no setting up the scene, nothing to gently guide the listener towards the actual music of the band. Right from the first moment onwards, it is made clear what the overall intentions as well as direction of the music will be: thrash metal. Period! An aggressive initial barrage of riffs, while seconds later the drums make an appearance and with the advent of the vocals shortly thereafter, the music sets off properly. Thrash metal meets melodic death metal is the brew served on the first release of the French band "Deliver The Suffering". One can debate whether they want to do the delivering or whether they want someone else to do the task. It is rather nebulous to be honest. Yet the unmistakable undercurrents are clear and the band sticks to these ... most of the time. No rule without an exception.

Anyway, the violent intents are generally very well reflected in the music. With ever dominant guitars, powerful drums and harsh growls by Manu - whom I, as of writing this in 2025, know for nearly twenty years by now - the music pounces forward in an aggressive and definitely merciless kind of way. It should be noted that there is basically no moment in the first two tracks in which the music calms down in any meaningful way. Do not be mistaken, the music is not endless riff bombardment and high speed torment, as could be suspected by a band of this genre, but rather a kind of balanced as well as tight approach of the two aforementioned keywords. It should be noted that one does not feel overwhelmed by the performance of the band, because the aggressive parts appear balanced with breaks and interludes. The opener would be a good example in this regard. A mixture of various levels of intensity and melodic thrash metal elements, receives a counterpoint by the solo guitar part in the middle of the track. The end reprises the opening in terms of riffs and arrangements. A much different story would be the title track, which would be the second one. It comes with a much denser atmosphere and tighter riff structures, the playfulness of the earlier piece appears to have been abandoned and replaced with something darker and more sinister. Apparently, the band has taken over the job of handling the delivery themselves.

With the track "Self Abuse", and as odd as it may sound, a short deviation from the earlier intensity appears all of a sudden and basically out of nowhere. This centrepiece of the release opens with calm acoustic guitars, and this muted performance continues for an astounding two minutes out of a total of 5:18. And even though the band returns to their intense metal music again after that as well as in the succeeding tracks, it is still odd to have a track with this kind of topic presented with such a deviation of musical focus. Especially, as there are no other calm moments to be found on this release at any other point. Maybe the depressive black metal has worn me down, and I need to hear screams, pain and torment every time a topic of this is dealt with. Whatever

it may be, the performance here is not convincing, and it may even be described as lackadaisical. And the remaining tracks? What about them? Well, their style is borrowed to a larger degree from the opener and on a small scale from the title track. These last two pieces have a slightly larger focus on the interplay of the guitars than an overall aggressiveness.

"Unleash The Chaos" provides a first glimpse into the band's concept of their music. This band from France does not mess around and 4.5 tracks offer a solid performance with some nice solo guitar elements.

You can find the release here:
`https://deliverthesuffering.bandcamp.com/album/unleash-the-chaos-ep`

Desperation Eclipse – Carcass Captivity

A dark and disgusting brew of the German funeral doom metal band Desperation Eclipse again. Similar to the 2024 album "Inner Ruin", two long tracks make an appearance on this latest album, yet some small but notable differences appear. Firstly, the lengths of the two compositions are not equal this time and second, in terms of the total amount of minutes, this one has several more to offer than the previous one; 15:37 vs 18:39. Naturally, those unfamiliar with this particular genre, will find the music on it hard to swallow and even more challenging to digest. And will probably shy away from the mere prospect of having to sit through not only one but two tracks of such excessive lengths of a genre they can probably only speculate about when it comes to sound and style and character.

Right from the start, the music is a thick and dark brew. It is music that offers no hope, no escape and no relief. Except for death itself, of course. In terms of the optics, the cover artwork appears to be a combination of ideas of both the earlier outputs: the disk, though entirely black in this case, from the debut ep and the coffin, which reminds on the skeleton and its positioning on the debut album. Also, the music itself progresses on a similar pattern. While listening to these two releases one after another, one immediately grasps the commonalities in terms of sound and structure. And even though the vocals are not as harsh as on "Inner Ruin", they still follow in line in style and character.

The music of Desperation Eclipse has a kind of continuity to it. Musical interludes, samples and moments of silence are something not to be found on this release. And while there are moments in which all calms down a bit and progresses somewhere else, the band has an apparent need to keep things going. The vocals play only a small part in this regard, and this becomes already clear in the first track "Carcass", in which longer passages without any lyrical expression are mainly carried by the instruments. And even though, repetition is a factor in this regard, it is still kept to a tolerable level. It all presents itself in a multilayered amalgamation. Harmonious and conflicting sounds of the guitars can be found throughout the release. Yet generally, a dense layer created by the rhythm guitar is amplified with a lead-guitar and its play. And even though the sound of the latter is not distorted and more harmonic, the slow and reduced kind of play is not able to invoke an uplifting experience. Also, this contrast is not always present, but something that the band falls back on to again and again.

There are of course similarities as well as differences between these two tracks. In a nutshell, one could point to the following: with the first track having a larger overall emphasis on the rhythm guitar and the basis of the track, the second one offers more space to the lead guitar. The impact of this is that especially in the first half a comparison between these two reveals a rather different atmosphere and character; one can easily use the title of the latter, "Captivity", and interpret a lot into it, especially once the music has had a chance to obtrude itself to the listener.

Desperation Eclipse stick to their peculiar and intense kind of funeral doom metal. Massive sounds, dark and haunting atmospheres, invocation of ideas and intense vocal interludes are what made and make up the performance of this band.

Personally, I find this release a step forward compared to the "Inner Ruin" release, because this latest output offers more facets and more complexity.

You can find the release here:
`https://desperationeclipse.bandcamp.com/album/carcass-captivity`

Eulalie – Craving For Dreams

The track that made me buy this release is the second one: ”Mirror In The Mirror”. Eulalie performed it at a festival of the British label Pure Life[5] and the combination of the music and as well as the accompanying visual effects left such an impression on me that I could not resist the temptation to buy ”Craving For Dreams”, of which this track is a part off. While I had no chance to attend the original live performance, a replay of the event was presented as part of a fundraiser event in December 2024, which then led me to purchase the release.

Out of the three tracks in total, this one stands out, and this has to do with it being a rather strange one and out of what one might commonly expect. Furthermore, it is also oddly captivating and of a sort that would grab the attention of the listener. And this has in part to do with the melodies, in part with the Japanese lyrics. All of these elements together create something different, and this is why especially this track should receive a larger recognition. But what is it specifically that makes ”Mirror In The Mirror” stand out?

Well, the title of it refers to something called an infinity mirror and while it is nice to know this fact, the music is not a conceptual representation of it. There is a certain amount of to and fro between the vocals and the electronic sounds going on, but one might imagine it to be chaotic, endlessly repeating, or in other words like a wild mess. What we have here, and how it is actually perceived, might differ in regard to the origin of a person. Whilst this may be speculation, someone from Japan or someone familiar with Japanese might have a different opinion of the track. As a German though, this play of the lyrics, the rhythmic alignment of the texts and the beats, are really fascinating. Music-wise, it reminds of a score from an anime movie. The tunes are playful, and over it all are the lyrics and their peculiar tone. Somewhat childishly captivating as well as childishly simple. Some repeated chords, a calm and steady rhythm and on top of it all is the voice. That is all you need, and it has resulted in this quite fascinating piece of music. Music to nod your head to. Music to whip your foot to.

And the other two tracks? Well, these are rather different in character and style. Basically, both contain the same elements, and while the focus on the vocals is in part similar, this alignment of ideas, this inner cohesion that makes ”Mirror In The Mirror” as fascinating as it is, can in neither of the other cases be found. That is not to say that these two are mere fillers and should be discarded. The opener has a nice atmosphere, while the last one has some intense beat parts. Yet it is the middle part of the release that shines too bright and which takes away some of the brightness of these other ones.

I can definitely recommend this release, and even if it is just to listen to this one track.

You can find the release here:

`https://eeulaliee.bandcamp.com/album/craving-for-dreams`

Fogweaver – Fogweaver

Fogweaver by Fogweaver saw the light of day in 2019. So much so good and from an ordinary perspective nothing out of the ordinary routine. The tags added to this release might be of a kind that could confuse someone, who happens only to ”enjoy” with mainstream music. ”ambient”, ”medieval ambient”, ”fantasy ambient”, ”fantasy synth”, and ”medieval synth” indicate a certain direction, but blurring it out with a too heavy emphasis on ”ambient” and ”synth”. Whether the reference to ”Ursula K. Le Guin” helps in this regard is unclear as well. And finally we have a cover artwork by James David Forbes, which depicts ”The Island of Austvågøy” and it was crafted in the mid 19th century. The additional information that its colour is warm and that a serene, calm view of a mountainous range with a body of water in front of it are displayed, help also little in this regard. Norway and fjord could be thrown into the discussion as well, but the ”Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” should be excluded from the discussion.

What is the music all about?

On the page of the album, users throw around the word dungeon synth to a considerable amount. Adding it to the aforementioned tags, then to an ordinary person it may be best described as music that pays homage to or is inspired by music that was used in the early days of roleplaying computer games; let us say past 1990. One way to describe it is simple repetitive melodies with some accompanying sound and rhythm elements and of an electronic type. How this actually turns out and is presented, depends on the band of course, but in the case of the US band Fogweaver, such would be the case. Imagine music from Enya, but less engaging and generally without vocals. On this release, there are no vocals, nor could I imagine there to be any. Or maybe only in a kind of way used by the Finnish band Nest on their early recordings. A small narrative element to enrich the overall flow of the sounds. Fogweaver’s approach is to have music that is driven by simple but striking melody, while the listener is venturing through motifs inspired by Ursula K. Le Guin. According to the entry at Bandcamp, the music was ”[i]nspired by the Earthsea books, especially the first trilogy (A Wizard of Earthsea, The Tombs of Atuan, The Farthest Shore)”.

[5] `https://purelifetapes.bandcamp.com/`

Well, what is it that one can find here? Instrumental music. Electronic music. A kind of ambient. Facets from the fantasy world. The melody is simple, the pace is steady, and a nice atmosphere is there. Especially the way all appears on this one is rather peculiar. Similar to what can be found in paintings from the Middle Ages going onwards, a warmth emanates from the music. It sparks the imagination, which is also due to the overall dreamy sound, which can be pointed towards as an underlying conceptual element. Furthermore, the repetitiveness of the motifs, the drums and their sound further amplifies this impression. There are no hectic facets or stark counterpoints used in the process of crafting the music. While multiple layers and melodies as well as a drum computer help to create a complex setting of sounds and arrangements, there are no facets, whose part is pushed into the foreground. Instead, it is a continuous and steady flow, which is restricted by the length of each of the tracks, but one could easily imagine the music going on for a bit longer.

There is nothing spectacular about the music, because no wild and furious performance on an instrument is to be discovered here. But such is not always needed. Just sit back, take a good book and enjoy the tunes and let the mind flow. Eight tracks have found their way on this album and they are really nice. A calm and charming set of melodies appear on this album.

You can find the release here:
`https://thefogweaver.bandcamp.com/album/fogweaver`

Memorandum – L'isolement distinct

"L'isolement distinct" is a continuation of the music of the debut release. Of course the music here is different and has its own unique vibe, but all in all the direction and intention remain the same. And even though funeral doom metal still marks the core and still remains a dominant factor throughout the release, black metal facets have sneaked their way in somehow. Not on a grand scale, but one can hear and experience these. Also, the aspect of variation and the use of some surprising sound elements is something that follows in line with what the band offered previously. Not the "standard" approach, if I may say so.

Four tracks, with each a different style, can be found on this release. With a somewhat psychedelic opening, the initial musical direction is funeral doom metal (of course) and it takes a while that the listener will experience a shift. Memorandum expresses it in a way that in each of the tracks, a certain key facet receives a change in it. While the base elements remain what they are, nuances appear in such a way as to make each of the tracks "unique". In some respect it enables one to pick from the compositions favourites so to speak. To name an example: With the second and the third track each having distinct sound/keyboard facets, maybe these can be enjoyed over the other ones. Matters are a bit different with the fourth and last track. Especially in terms of the last track.

Yes, what has been written above is of course true for this track as well: it has a distinct character and sound. With 8:30 it is also the most to offer of the bunch, with the obvious outcome that the band made a lot of use of this. Silent parts have found their way into it, as well as keyboard passages. Of all the compositions that the band has released so far, which are six in total, this one dares to venture off into unknown waters on the largest degree. It is here that Memorandum dares to experiment most. And it is also the one, in which the black metal makes an appearance, and not a small one at that. Roughly around the mark of half of the track, the music switches to a wall of guitars, of fast played riffs, which then erupt into a kind of fast-paced black metal. Of course, the overall sound of the music has been changed by this. What had been a dark and somewhat depressive kind of music has changed to aggressive blasts? If one had been given the task of listening and then guessing the band, judging from the sound and style, then it would be impossible to do in this case. It is an absurd juxtaposition of metal types to be honest. As the last track was not destined to conclude with the black metal part, a calm minimalist keyboard arrangement does the job for it.

What would be the conclusion here? A lot of variation is fun? Or to be more precise: even a lot of variation in terms of funeral doom metal can be fun. Leaving the "additional" facets aside for a second, the bottom line, except for the last track, is a set of basic and well performed funeral doom metal tracks. They are interesting to listen to, have their charm and a level of uniqueness.

In the end, it will all come down to the following: how much does one like extensive variation on a single album?

That is the question that needs an answer, when it comes to enjoy this release.

Personally, I prefer this one over the first output by the band. Even though it may be a bit too much at times, the level of unpredictability is a welcome element on this release.

You can find the release here:
`https://memorandum.bandcamp.com/album/lisolement-distinct`

Můra – Needle Cathedral

Sickish tunes at the beginning and throughout the release. It is not so much like ”pins and needles”, but it rather reminds of bashing a hammer in the face of someone. Cavernous and harsh vocals create together a disturbing counterpoint to the ever present and ever intense and ever distorted guitars. Death/doom metal is the genre listed at the Metal Archives, and it gives a good indication of what to expect.

The last track out of three would be the one I like best on this recording. Why? Well, the utter nastiness of this track, the various stages of the sound and the ”disgusting” mixture of the vocals and this wall of guitars, make it a real ”pleasure” to listen to. Those other two tracks do not differ much, but this longest piece is a chaotic amalgam of ideas that just works. It just has this extra nudge, which makes it preferable over the other ones.

Both of the genres find their expression, while ”doom” can be pointed towards here as a slow way of playing music, while in terms of the death metal part, the band sticks to a midtempo performance with some occasional intense bursts. At times, the music reminds on a twisted version of Bolt Thrower, especially due to the rhythm guitars. Music that has a dense layer of riffs as a basis, with some lead-guitar elements on top of it. And while there are some similarities, the vocals and their intensity are something that the British band would never use in their music, while the Czech band Můra would.

Something that needs also some slight discussion is the aspect of noise. With the opener using this element to start off the release, it basically restricted to this one small part. Yes, the last track fades out in this kind of way, and due to this attempting to create the illusion of a ”loop”, it still feels as if the limitation to these parts has been a missed opportunity so to speak. It would have been nice to have some additional disturbing or noisy element appear now and then in order to break the flow of things a bit. The music by itself is already varied to quite an extent, yet it still feels as if some additional push would have been nice.

As can be seen from the cover artwork, the overall setting is anything but nice and charming. A diverting piece of death/doom metal.

You can find the release here:

`https://muradoom.bandcamp.com/album/needle-cathedral`

Noriko Shakti – One Spliff A Day Keeps The Evil Away

I stumbled over her music by chance, and it is the cover artwork that is to blame for that. Bandcamp has this thing of offering live stream and listening sessions, and these are all listed on a very specific site. Since I live at a rather odd place, which I would describe as a graveyard with a ferry, it is difficult for me to get out much and to attend concerts; which has also several other reasons, but the location plays a good part as well. Why? Well, it takes me quite a while to get somewhere. So, I took and take some interest into the streaming options and this is how I stumbled over this release.

I watched the video of the eponymous track of the release. I listened to the release. I bought the release.

The lyrics on ”One Spliff A Day Keeps The Evil Away” are not sung by Noriko Shakti but by Lady Skavya. Her expression of the text is influenced by a dialect, which adds a nice touch to the performance. In terms of the music, it is drum and bass and reggae stuff here; in terms of the genre, this is some really thin ice for me. What makes it interesting is the flow and the intensity of it. Though the main focus lies on the vocals here, this is of course only true in terms of the first track, since the second one is an instrumental version of the first one, the music itself has a nice flow and a nice assortment of facets. The breaks and beats are nice, and it is good to listen to. These 4:42 are quite enjoyable, and I rather find myself taking another spin, then progressing to a new track from a different band/project.

Personally, the version with the vocals is better, because this additional element really adds something to the track. The video is also recommended.

You can find the release here:

`https://norikoshakti.bandcamp.com/album/one-spliff-a-day-keeps-the-evil-away`

Rahel Talts – New and Familiar

I am not a Jazz person. Why? Well, it is difficult to use the music's rhythms and align them with my job. Constancy and energy are something I need in order to get into a tunnel and get programming done. This genre makes this difficult. It lacks the energy; it lacks the overall level of expression in terms of sound and character. Also, its playfulness is too much of a distraction and works as a counterpoint to the flow that I need in order to get things done. Eiger from Aara would be much more in line with my preferences - to name just one recent example. You listened to this their album and are traumatized and scared and need counselling? Life is tough, you know. Do not blame me.

Why do I listen to Rahel Talts's releases anyway?

Well, at times there is a certain need to explore stuff out of the boundaries of what I tend to listen to on a day-to-day basis. Looking back, I do not know why I stumbled over her among all the other Jazz bands/projects on Bandcamp, but there we are.

Do I think I can give a proper textual representation and analysis of her music? Nope. But I do it anyway.

The title of the release is a nice take on the core musical concept presented here. And it is also quite silly. Each album, even when the music is nothing but a repetition of what had been played, performed and recorded earlier, is always new as it is familiar. There is never something completely identical, because there is never a chance to record an album in an exact kind of way again. And to derail it all a bit more, why not close this introduction with a short discussion of her Bandcamp page and the cover artwork. There are no "colourless green ideas" on this album, yet a certain emphasis is placed on it out of the overall visual spectrum. Liveliness and positiveness is something that appears that it could be pointed towards in regard to this release.

I have already written so much and said so little, that is Jazz for you.

"New and Familiar", the album and not the track, has an odd structure. Eight tracks in total, the centre of it is a four piece "Conversation" arrangements. Two tracks lead up to it and two tracks lead out, while the title track marks the end of it all. Its counterpoint, the opener, is an Estonian folk song, and it would also be the only to have lyrics added to the Bandcamp entry. All the tracks follow a certain musical logic and there is a certain emphasis on musical harmony. A plethora of musical instruments presents the arrangements in a variety of ways. Rarely dropping to minimalism or to chaotic and wild solo elements, the flow of the rhythms and motifs result in a steady as well as charming assortment of music. Folk music reinterpreted in a Jazz way is how it all starts here.

"Restless", the second composition, is exactly that: an ever pushed piece of music. Especially the saxophone does its part in this regard. It is maybe the most intense track on this album. A bravado of rhythmic and musical arrangements as well as intertwined melodies can be found. And even though it transitions towards the next track in a calm kind of way, the juxtaposition of this wild bravado of arrangements, next to the calm opening of the first of four conversations, feels a bit odd. But maybe this is Jazz for you. So grab your €1.99 bottle of French Bordeaux from Aldi and gulp it down in long sips, because there is a chance y'all need it.

The setting is different here. It appears to be more about counterpoints, about stuff throwing stuff to and fro. "I", a Roman numeral, offers jumpy airy music. Imagine a score to an easy-going scene. Something with a nice pace and a certain amount of action and business. Of course, it does not stay this way. If there is one thing that could be pointed towards in the second track as a reference, then it is that the nagging and the discussions begin. That would be my way of "reading" the sax. Overall, though, it still appears to be rather playful, and no stuff is thrown around. "III" is quite muted and feels more like a sobering down, then getting any proper discussion done. Yet, one has to point to the end of the track as somewhat odd, considering how cheerful the tune becomes all of a sudden. Is this a jubilation over a won argument or the exaltation over the fact that the "opponent" or "the other" has left the scene. "IV", the last and shortest of it all, feels like an outro and maybe attempts to invoke the impression that some kind of harmonious resolution was established.

The last two tracks offer more of the same, as they basically present earlier routines rearranged and reinterpreted. Nice melodies, nothing crazy or weird, but some well arranged pieces.

An interesting release full of charming arrangements and motifs.

You can find the release here:

`https://raheltalts.bandcamp.com/album/new-and-familiar`

Sandrine St-Laurent – Celles que je connais

Bloody nonsense. The title of the release is bloody nonsense. ”Celles que je connais”, give me a break. A proper one would be: The cuddling and humming parade. Why? Well, it is her go to thing. Every time she runs out of ideas, thinks she needs to fill a quota or some other hidden reason, she turns to humming of some sort. And it is not like she needs to compensate for something. With her music having a soothing and very melodic character, which some people would already use to relax and calm down to, the presence of this ”cuddle” factor is actually a bit of a surprise. Maybe one should go so far and call it excessive.

To clarify it a bit: the following list contains all the tracks that have this added effect: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Which makes eighty per cent. Yes, this release has quite a good amount of tracks to make one feel good. But what does this music, aside from the humming, sound like? Well, it is a kind of folk music with rockish elements. The attitude in the tracks is easy-going, and a lofty breeze goes through the tracks. Folk, indie, alternative might be the appropriate tags that can be taken from the album entry at Bandcamp. It is music that wants to be a different, while still adhering to a certain definiteness in terms of the atmosphere and character.

Vocals, leaving the humming parade aside, are not an omnipresent element in the music. At times, the calm textures created by the various instruments are able to have a certain amount of peace and unfold their potential. Naturally, just have a look at the aforementioned tags, the melodies are simple and not progressive or even avant-garde. The ten pieces on this album are of a melodic, slightly catchy and down to Earth type. With some of the tracks having a slightly more melancholic touch, ”Des Lunes” or ”Vert-de-gris”, other ones are much more on the positive side of things; ”Lumière”, ”Ici”.

Overall, it is a really charming release.

You can find the release here:

`https://sandrinest-laurent.bandcamp.com/album/celles-que-je-connais`

The unknown ones

Dream Teller

Main releases (on Bandcamp): Vides – Date: 2024-08-04 A Dream We Didn't Know About – 2022-05-18

Review on "Vides" Tags: acoustic, alternative, indie, classical, folk, indie folk, Riga

The aspect of telling a dream is nothing new. Even in the times of the Babylonians this aspect had been of some importance, and numerous Cuneiform tablets deal with the aspect of the narration of dreams. There were even tablets which dealt with the setting up of dream rituals to enable a person to be able to communicate with the Gods and to get some help in regard to certain issues; but I digress. This band from Riga would not have such a broad conceptual background at heart. One can suspect that neither of the five tracks, whose lyrics are all in Latvian, would deal with anything that transgresses the cultural boundaries on such a scale as would be necessary in order to fully embrace or even appreciate what had been written about earlier. Not that I would dare to belittle their topics or lyrics.

"... new music that reflects their personal path to self-knowledge."

Anyway.

Vides, translates to environment or environmental, since the band is from Latvia and not from France. Five songs have made it on their 2024 release, and one has to praise their effort. And what would be the style of their music? You see the tags above, right? Forget them. Aside from Riga, none of these do explain the performance in a way that would make sense. One could point to "alternative" as some kind of reference, but ask yourself: what does this word actually mean? Exactly. Not much. "Kurš Turēs Rūpi" opens in a way that lays the basis for the overall direction of the music. It is a mixture of rock, alternative elements, folk and jazz. Maybe the most interesting aspect is the lack of an ordinary song-structure. Multiple layers of instruments, whose play is a wild arrangement of counterpoints, a wild to and fro between the vocals, along with arrangements, which are unconventional to say the least. Would English give the music a different spin? Well, that is difficult to say. Maybe the Latvian tongue adds another facet to it all.

It does not get easier or more accessible with the second track. But it gets a lot catchier. Its underlying rhythmic figure is really nice and the piano along with the vocals make this track really enjoyable. The middle part is performed by a piano and the roughly ninety seconds are surprisingly furious; at least compared to the rather calm but steady earlier part of this track. Once the interlude is over, the earlier setting takes over again and the earlier laid out atmosphere reappears. It continues a while in this kind of only, only to fade out shortly after and with the instruments loosing a grip on the music.

There is one thing I need to mention, I feel personally offended by the third track. This jolly and joyful messing around is something that stands in utter opposition to my general mood and view on life as a whole. "Sapņotāja Vaigs" is therefore a track that in part is quite an endurance to listen to. More misery, please! This brisk way of having fun is simply too much for my ears. And to experience it in the middle of the track, dastardly snuck into it no less, makes it even worse. "Tēja Pie Gangas" has a more rockish touch and surprise surprise, "Tuvība" is actually a track to which the label "folk" could be applied. There is nothing of the distorted guitars, nothing of the uncommon song arrangements to be found. A simple and calm piece of music.

What to make of Vides, then?

Well, it is quite a charming release. In terms of the sound, style and character it is difficult to put under a single banner, but there is no immediate need to always do so. This would be their second album, and it marks a step in a different direction. The music is more rockish, is more daring in terms of the songwriting, even though their previous album had these elements from the Jazz genre as well. What has definitely changed is the language. Whilst the debut had been in English, for their latest output a switch to Latvian, the native language of the band members, can be discovered.

This release is for those who would like to listen to music that steps a bit outside the ordinary routine and concepts. Music full of conflicting emotions, atmospheres and sounds. Really good, actually.

`https://dream-teller.bandcamp.com/album/a-dream-we-didnt-know-about`

Current price: 7€ or more

Links

`https://dream-teller.bandcamp.com/`

`https://www.instagram.com/_dreamteller/`

Vanoa

Main releases (on Bandcamp): Origines – Date: 2020-12-22

Review on "Origines" Tags: pop, acoustic guitar, acoustic pop, chanson, folk, France

The tags indicate a certain direction, and there is no venturing off into any other one. Indeed, the music is an assortment of calm pieces, which would be able to sate the thirst of an audience; yet, it appears that such a group is nowhere to be found. Why is that? An aspect that comes to mind when listening to her songs is a general tendency to be undecided about what to actually want and what to express. Is it French music? Is it English music? Does it attempt to be both? The cover artwork says it all. A beautiful face and a professionally taken picture. All is polished, all is nice, all appears in such a way as to not disturb the overall sense of serenity. And this is something I do not like very much. Edges are important. Small nudges are important. Sneakingly added disturbances are important. Break the flow, break all that is so gentle and predictable. And, yes, I listen to Merzbow; thank you for playing along.

And after all these rants and not so nice words, some soothing praises.

She has quite a nice voice. The opener has a nice and captivating atmosphere, and also some of the other tracks have nice arrangements and a nice flow. In some respect it reminds of sitting somewhere close to the Mediterranean coast and enjoying the scenery, the atmosphere and all the warm sunny weather. It has an easiness, which can be appreciated by those, who happen to have a fancy for it. Maybe the title of this release refers to a certain mood or attitude in terms of approaching life, and the calmness of the melodies attempt to reflect that. While the main focal elements on this recording are her voice and her guitar, also drums, a bass guitar and the sort are allowed to make an appearance. All is in a gentle flow and hovers like in a gentle breeze.

This idea is a thread that can be found throughout the release. A short glance over the tags and the track titles reveals the overall conceptual background of this release: emotions, relationships and the sort. It attempts to tug you under the arm and move along through the open and wide and pastel-coloured scenery; I do not think there would be red wine, but one never knows. What makes the music interesting is the way the instruments and the voice interact. With a lot of vocalists sticking closely to rhythmic pattern, as if they would abhor the idea of letting go and granting the instruments some space, in this case it is rather that Vanoa add something with her voice because she can, but not because she must. The easiness in the melodies are enough to carry it all along for a while, and even though this approach was not followed closely throughout the release, at least part of it has. Personally, jazzy elements would be nice or some breaks, something that would work as a counterpoint to the ever gentle serenity of her music.

Maybe the music comes over differently live and on stage. Maybe then it is able to leave a different impression. I do not think that I am a part of the so-called target audience. Others will definitely think different about this release.

`https://vanoa.bandcamp.com/album/origines`

Current price: 9,99€ or more

Links

`https://vanoa.bandcamp.com/`

`https://www.facebook.com/vanoamusic`